

EXTRACTS.

SIR W. W. HUNTER ON INDIAN MISSIONARIES.

The *Nineteenth Century* contains an excellent article from the pen of Sir W. W. Hunter on Missionary enterprise in India. He says:—

Many years ago, when I lived in an Indian district, and looked out on the world with young eyes, I noted down certain personal observations which I may venture to reproduce here. The missionaries enjoyed the popular esteem accorded in India to men of letters and teachers of youth. They were more highly regarded than the guides who had opened up the paths of Western knowledge, and who were but the pioneers of education among the backward races. The mission printing-presses might almost be said to have created Bengali as a language of literary prose; and they had developed under their tutelage the vernaculars of the interior, or the internal conflicts which they passed through, their lives did not appear in the light of a Great Renunciation. "To the natives," I wrote, "the missionary seems to be a charitable Englishman who keeps an excellent cheap school, speaks the language well, preaches a European form of their old inscriptions, and drives out his wife and little ones in a pony-carriage. This friendly neighbour, this affectionate husband, this good man, is of an estimable type, of a type which had done much to raise the English character in the eyes of the natives, but it is not the traditional type to which the popular imagination in India must conform. The missionary has neither the personal sanctity nor the simple message of the visionary who comes forth from his fasting and his prayer in the forest. Instead, he has a domestic theology which, when he discusses it with the Brahmins, seems to the populace to resolve itself into a wrangle as the comparative merits of the Hindu Trinity and the European Trinity, and the comparative evidence for the incarnation of Krishna and the incarnation of Christ. The missionary, however, prefers, if he is to have a trial and an incarnation, to keep his own ones. The educated native thinks that trials and incarnations belong to a state of mental development which he has passed."

Since these words were written, a new form of missionary effort has arisen in India. The great Branghian societies to whom the rapid progress of the past thirty years has been chiefly due, go on with their work more actively than ever. But side by side with their small Christian brotherhoods are springing up—ascetic fraternities living in common, and realising the Indian ideal of the religious life. In Bombay, Calcutta, in Delhi, certain houses of Christian celibates have been becoming recognised centres of influence among the Indian university youth. They consist of English gentlemen of the highest culture, who have deliberately made up their minds to give their lives without payment to the cause. They are indifferent to hardships, fearless of disapproval, and ready to sacrifice of labour, and in no hurry to produce results. The Cambridge Mission at Delhi has got into its hands the chief share in the University teaching in the ancient Mughal capital. Six hundred students in its college and a well-filled hostel attest the confidence which it has gained with the upper and educated classes, notwithstanding the public training of a constant supply of Christian natives, youth as masters for the provincial school. The Oxford brethren in Calcutta, while conducting a purely Christian seminary, exert their special influence by discussions and personal interviews with the graduates and undergraduates of the University. Every afternoon a number sit waiting to see any young man who cares to call, and to talk with him on any question which he chooses to start. If he wishes to be alone with the missionary, one else is present: if two or three youths come together, the missionary is equally at their service. Some of these young men are the sons of the palace, the baron, and the dewan; some are the sons of the landholder, the merchant, and the official; some are the sons of the village, the peasant, and the artisan. They are all, however, of the highest quality, and they are all, without exception, of the highest quality.

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